

822
G71f



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

Gott (H)



THE
FOUR HUNCHBACKS;

OR,

The Beggars of Tivoli;

A Farcetta, in One Act;

BY H. GOTT,

AUTHOR OF

ELSHIE; or, the WIZARD of the MOOR.

PERFORMED FOR THE FIRST TIME, MONDAY, APRIL 18th, 1825,

AT THE

EAST-LONDON THEATRE.

(TO WHICH IS PREFIXED THE ORIGINAL TALE.)



LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN LOWNDES, 9, SOUTH-SIDE OF DRURY
LANE THEATRE

[Price One Shilling and Sixpence.]

THE FOUR HUNCHBACKS.

At a short distance from Douai, there stood a castle on the bank of a river near a bridge. The master of this castle was hunchbacked. Nature had exhausted her ingenuity in the formation of his whimsical figure. In place of understanding, she had given him an immense head, which nevertheless was lost between his two shoulders : he had thick hair, a short neck, and a horrible visage.

Spite of his deformity, this bugbear bethought himself of falling in love with a beautiful young woman, the daughter of a poor but respectable burgess of Douai. He sought her in marriage, and as he was the richest person in the district, the poor girl was delivered up to him. After the nuptials he was as much an object of pity as she, for, being devoured by jealousy, he had no tranquillity night nor day, but went prying and rambling every where, and suffered no stranger to enter the castle.

One day during the Christmas festival, while standing sentinel at his gate, he was accosted by three humpbacked minstrels. They saluted him as a brother, as such asked him for refreshments, and at the same time, to establish the fraternity, they ostentatiously shouldered their humps at him.—Contrary to expectation, he conducted them to his kitchen, gave them a capon with peas, and to each a piece of money over and above. Before their departure, however, he warned them never to return, on pain of being thrown into the river. At this threat of the Chatelain the minstrels laughed heartily, and took the road to town, singing in full chorus, and dancing in a grotesque manner, in derision of their brother-hump of the castle. He, on his part, without paying farther attention, went to walk in the fields.

The lady, who saw her husband cross the bridge, and had heard the minstrels, called them back to amuse her. They had not been long returned to the castle, when her husband knocked at the gate, by which she and the minstrels were equally alarmed. Fortunately, the lady perceived in a neighbouring room three empty coffers. Into each of these she stuffed a minstrel, shut the covers, and then opened the gate to her husband. He had only come back to espy the conduct of his wife as usual, and, after a short stay, went out anew, at which you may believe his wife was not dissatisfied. She instantly ran to the coffers to release her prisoners, for night was approaching, and her husband would not probably be long absent. But what was her dismay, when she found them all three suffocated ! Lamentation, however, was useless.—The main object now was to get rid of the dead bodies, and she had not a moment to lose. She ran then to the gate, and seeing a peasant go by, she offered him a reward of thirty livres, and leading him into the castle, she took him to one of the coffers, and shewing him its contents, told him he must throw the dead body into the river ; he asked for a sack, put the carcase into it, pitched it over the bridge, and then returned quite out of breath to claim the promised reward.

“ I certainly intended to satisfy you,” said the lady, “ but you ought first to fulfil the condition of the bargain—you have agreed to rid me of the dead body, have you not ?—There, however, it is still.” Saying this, she showed him to the other coffer in which the second humpbacked minstrel had expired. At this sight the clown was perfectly confounded—“ how the devil ! come back ! a sorcerer !”—he then stuffed the body into the sack and threw it, like the other, over the bridge, taking care to put the head down, and to observe that it sank.

Meanwhile the lady had again changed the position of the coffers, so that the third was now in the place which had been successively occupied by the two others. When the

peasant returned, she showed him the remaining dead body—“ you are right, friend,” said she, “ he must be a magician, for there he is again.” The rustic gnashed his teeth with rage. “ What the devil ! am I to do nothing but carry about this humpback ?” He then lifted him up, with dreadful imprecations and having tied a stone round the neck, threw him into the middle of the current, threatening, if he came out a third time, to despatch him with a cudgel.

The first object that presented itself to the clown, on his way back for his reward, was the hunchbacked master of the castle returning from his evening walk, and making towards the gate. At this sight the peasant could no longer restrain his fury. “ Dog of a humpback, are you there again ?” So saying, he sprung on the Chatelain, threw him over his shoulders, and hurled him headlong into the river after the minstrels.

“ I’ll venture a wager you have not seen him this last time,” said the peasant, entering the room where the lady was seated. She answered, she had not. “ You were not far from it,” replied he : “ the sorcerer was already at the gate, but I have taken care of him—be at your ease—he will not come back now.”

The lady instantly comprehended what had occurred, and recompensed the peasant with much satisfaction.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



ANTONIO DUNNYPLACKETT	<i>Mr. Monk.</i>
RICARDO	<i>Mr. Harding.</i>
PERO	<i>Mr. C. Edwards.</i>
NARBUC CARBUG BARBUG } <i>The Three Beggars</i>	<i>Messrs. T. Hill, ____ Marquis, ____ Saker.</i>
SERVANT	<i>Mr. Shoard.</i>
LEONORA.....	<i>Mrs. H. Beverly.</i>
SUSETTE	<i>Miss Ainslie.</i>

THE
FOUR HUNCHBACKS.



ACT I.

SCENE THE FIRST.

A large old-fashioned Gothic Drawing-room ; in it are seen three large antique Chests, one in centre at back, and one on each side, forming part of the Furniture of the Room, like Oaken Settees.—A window open, shews the Public Road, skirting the House, a Door seen, P. S.

LEONORA discovered seated in a pensive attitude.

Leonora. What a vexatious thing it is to think that a fine high-spirited girl like myself, with a fortune of my own the day I'm one-and-twenty, should be obliged to crouch to the tyrannical humours of a hideous old guardian, as deformed in his mind as he is in his body, and all because he wants to marry me to his own ugly self ;—but I'll disappoint him :—I'd sooner —

SUSSETTE pops in her head at the door.

Susette. Ma'am, my Lady, Lady Leonora —

Leonora. Now, Wench, what do you want ?

i Susette. Merely to tell you Ma'am that old Mumblepumps is gone out, he wont be back these two hours ; and now if you like you may go and take a walk too.

Leonora. No, wench, no ! I'll keep at home, by tasting the sweets of liberty, for, however short a period, I only sigh after it the more. When I return to my cage, I'll e'en try to reconcile myself to it ; 'tis but for a twelvemonth longer, and then —

Susette. And then, you're your own mistress.

Leonora. Yes, one-and-twenty.

Susette. Fortune.

Leonora. Liberty !

Susette. Love !

Leonora. And Ricardo.

Susette. A good little husband, and a fine large family.—Lord, Ma'am, if I was in your place, how I should long to be one-and-twenty.

Leonora. Heigho !

Susette. Oh, don't sigh, Ma'am, we shall weather the storm yet I'll be bound. Your old guardian, you know, thinks that I'm in his interest ; this gives me a thousand opportunities of pleasing you, and teasing him ; and I needn't tell you, Ma'am, that when once a woman sets her mind on mischief, old nick himself can't stop her.

Leonora. Why how you run on, wench—we must rather conciliate than irritate. These men, Susette, can be very troublesome if they like.

Susette. Not half so troublesome as we can, Ma'am ; I'm sure you have no respect for old guardy, and if you had, even if you was to marry him, take my advice, Ma'am, never give these men, these sort of two-legged he-animals too many liberties—they'll get saucy on your hands, if you do, for instance, if they wish to walk one way, be sure, nine times out of ten, to walk the other, and if you do oblige them the tenth, make it a particular favour ! and whenever they presume to ask for a kiss, give 'em your hand to kiss, tell 'em that's quite good enough for them, besides you can say you can't afford to have your lips wore out that way.

[*Dunnyplackett coughs without.*

Lord, there he is, Ma'am, returned—there's old Dunnyplackett, now sit down and get in the dumps as quiet as you please.

Leonora. Oh, the very sight of old guardee is enough for

that, so to avoid the dumps, I'll retire, and when he's gone tell me.

[Exit.]

Enter DUNNYPLACKETT coughing; he is richly dressed, blind of one eye, and hump-backed, with an extraordinary compliment of nose and chin.

Dunnyplackett. Bless my soul, it's a sharp morning this, sets one coughing, makes one almost look like an old man—I, too, that am in the prime of life, look sharply to marry my ward Leonora, and most likely have a very large family.—
(Coughs violently, and on turning sees Susette laughing at him, and trying to conceal it.)

Susette. Why, what the devil are you laughing at, eh? at me?

Susette. You, Lord, no Sir.

Dunnyplackett. What then? Tell me this instant, or —

Susette. Not at you, Sir, not at you—I was—I was—
(stifling a titter) laughing at your family.

Dunnyplackett. Why what do you mean by that, you hussey? What do you mean by laughing at my family, before even one of them's born?

Susette. No, no, my dear Sir, you mistake—I was laughing to think of the many merry romps I should have with the little ones, particularly if they was like their dear, amiable father.

Dunnyplackett. Ah, Susette. (*Looks at himself*). And if they should be fortunate enough to prove a perfect resemblance of me, I flatter myself they'll strike people with astonishment.

Susette. Oh the sweet creatures!

Dunnyplackett. Ha, ha, ha! now don't, don't, you only flatter —

(They both join in the laugh; he bursts into a violent fit of coughing.)

Susette. Hem! Fine strong cough, Sir!

Dunnyplackett. Yes, child, yes! shews the vigour of my constitution. (Coughs) Curse the cough. (Aside.)—It is a fine strong one, it's so strong that it's made me quite weak—I know I'm done up. Now, mind, Susette, what I say

to you—I'm going to Tivoli upon a little business, I shan't be long, but now do, my good girl, have an eye upon Leonora ; don't let that Ricardo or his man Pero in on any account, I know he wants to run away with her, and only think what a distressing thing it would be to lose my wife before I was married to her.

Susette. Oh, shocking, Sir, lamentable !

Dunnyplackett. If you see them only lurking about the house, even within half a mile, take my blunderbuss, and shoot them.

Susette. I will, Sir—I'll tell you what, I'll do better than that—I'll set the dogs at 'em.

Dunnyplackett. Ay, do, lucky thought, I hope they'll worry them well. Good bye, only be a good girl, and mind my interests, and when I come back, I'll give you—I'll give you —

Susette. Yes, Sir, what ? —

Dunnyplackett. A kiss.

[*Exit at door.*

Susette. Stupid old fool, if you can give me nothing better, or more substantial than that, you may keep it yourself; however, I must humour him, for while he thinks me in his interest, it gives me an opportunity of lightening the captivity of my much-loved mistress. Well, after all, there's nothing like liberty and love.

SONG.

I.

What makes the Soldier's heart beat high,

When fierce he meets invading foes ?

What gives the Maid the sparkling eye,

When to meet her swain she goes ?

Oh ! 'tis Love and Liberty,

Oh ! 'tis Liberty and Love.

II.

What makes the Sailor's heart beat strong,

Returning home from war's alarms ?

He clasps his Bride not seen so long,
And she, she rushes to his arms.

Oh ! 'tis Love and Liberty,
Oh ! 'tis Liberty and Love.

Enter LEONORA, cautiously.

Leonora. Hist, hist, Susette !
[The notes of a Guitar heard outside.]
Why, Susette, I say.—

Enter SUSETTE.

Susette. Oh, my lady, my lady, my lady, old Dunny-plackett's gone out, and wont be home yet awhile ; and just outside the door there's three travelling Musicians, but, Lord bless me, such frights did I never see ; why they're uglier if possible than old Guardee.

Leonora. Psha, wench, I'm out of humour I tell thee ; however, if it pleases thee, e'en let them come in.

Susette. Oh, that's delightful, I do so love a little bit of music and a dance. (Goes to the door.) Come in, beauties—come in —

Enter CARBUC, BARBUG, and NARBUC, three squalid miserable looking beggars, with Guitars, each of them blind of one eye, humpbacked, with an enormous nose and chin, wooden shoes, and their patched dresses of the same make and colour. They all bow.

Leonora. Mercy on me, what frights.

Carbuc. There, I told you so, let's be off.

Narbuc. Stop, stop, I tell you she's struck with us.

Barbuc. Struck, eh ! Damme, then, she's struck comical, she eyes us as a cat would three rats, bothered which to make choice of first.

Leonora. From whence come you ?

Narbuc. From Tivoli, lady.

Leonora. And where are you going to ?

Carbuc. Truly, a difficult question to answer, lady, we go any where and every where.

Barbuc. Yes, and in whatever house we go, there we wish to stay, only let them find us plenty of eating, plenty of drinking, and plenty of snuff, and we never wish to leave 'em.

Carbuc. (*Aside to Barbuc.*) Barbuc, whenever you ask people for snuff, always contrive first to leave your nose at home, or else you'll frighten them.

Barbuc. (*To Narbuc.*) Narbuc, what does Carbuc mean?

Narbuc. Why, Barbuc, he means, that when you ask people for a pinch of snuff they'll refuse you, because you've got nowhere to put it.

Leonora. And prithee friends what can you do in return for this good cheer?

Barbuc. Ask our guitars.

Leonora. Are you skilled in music?

Narbuc. Indifferently well; and to help the music out we oftentimes shake a leg.

Carbuc. What Narbuc! shake a leg, shake one leg, my lady, we shake two a piece.

Susette. Oh, my lady, my lady, how I should like to hear 'em sing and see 'em dance.

Leonora. Well, girl your wish shall be complied with.—Now friends, trust me, your endeavours shall be well rewarded.

Susette. But stop, my lady, to make all secure I'll first lock the door. (*Locks the door.*) Now beauties, begin.

SONG.

I.

Tho' beggars we be, yet merry are we,
The children of frolic and fun;
We never despair, laugh at sorrow and care,
Three jolly dogs every one.

CHORUS.

So we foot it merrily,
Guitars ring cherily;
For we are the boys
That kick up a noise,
Three jolly dogs every one.

II.

Tho' we've all lost an eye, we can each of us spy,
 A pretty girl under the rose ;
 If with joy she dont jump, when I cock up my hump,
 Yet she's sure to fall in love with my nose.

Chorus.

III.

If the girls prove cross, still we're ne'er at a loss,
 But with music recall the sweet smile ;
 If our noses should fail, why our chins must prevail,
 They laugh, and we dance all the while.

Chorus.

As the chorus ends, the music changes to another lively air, and the three beggars perform a grotesque dance.

Leonora. Bravely done, Susette, get them some refreshment.

Susette. Yes, Ma'am, they shall have a drop of the very best wine in the house—I'll tell you what, my lady, I'll go into your old guardee's chamber, and see if I can't steal a bottle of the very best vintage—the old hunks always keeps it there, that he may take his drops upon the sly.

[*Exit Susette.*

Leonora. When you have refreshed yourselves, good friends, I will reward you with a piece of money, and you may then depart, for should my guardian return while you are here, he would be angry at such an infringement of his orders, and might be tempted to do you mischief.

Carbuc. There, do you hear that ? Let's be off—I shan't stop for any thing.

Narbuc. I shall stop for the wine.

Barbuc. And I for the money.

Enter SUSETTE with bottle and three glasses.

Susette. Here it is, a bottle of the best wine in all Italy,

I found it on the table just as old guardee had left it. Come beauties drink,

[She fills each a glass ; they bow to Leonora, and all drink off the contents of their glass at the same time ; when finished they each make faces at the other, as if they had swallowed something remarkably unpleasant.

Susette. A'nt it beautiful ?—It's a dose for an Emperor.

Barbuc. A dose for the devil —

Narbuc. A dose for an Emperor—then I wish an Emperor had it with all my heart and soul.

Carbuc. Stinking cabbage water, by all that's beautiful.

Susette. Why you impudent —

[A loud coughing heard without.

Oh, my lady —

Leonora. Good heavens ! it's my guardian —

Susette. If he finds you three here, he'll murder every one of you.

Carbuc. Hide us.

Narbuc. The devil.

Barbuc. Put us any where.

[The three beggars run about the stage in the greatest disorder, trying to hide themselves.

Leonora. Stay, stay, for heaven's sake, what can be done, Susette ?

Susette. I have it. [Goes to the three boxes and throws up the lids. In here, if you value your lives.

Carbuc.

Narbuc. } What, there ? Not a bit of it.

Barbuc. }

[Cough heard again, and knocking at door.

Susette. Hark, he's here—in, in.

[*Leonora and Susette force them into the boxes, which Susette locks, and puts the keys in her pocket.* the door]

[Exit Leonora.

Dunnyplacket. (Without.) Susette, why, Susette, I say.

Susette. Coming, Sir, coming.

She unlocks the door, and enter DUNNYPLACKETT.]

Dunnyplackett. Why the devil did'nt you let me in before, what did you lock the door for?

Susette. Only to keep all safe, Sir.

Dunnyplackett. Plague take it, to think that I should be so forgetful as to neglect taking them papers with me that I left on the table in my chamber. It's cost me an *extra* mile's walk—I must get them, however. (*As he's going Susette stops him.*)

Susette. Had'nt I better fetch them, Sir?

Dunnyplackett. No, come out of my way, I'll fetch them myself. [Exit *Dunnyplackett*, o. p.

Susette. Mercy on me, what will become of me? he'll find out that the bottle's gone. Oh guardian of chambermaids, only let me get out of this scrape, and I'll never do so any more.

Enter DUNNYPLACKETT with papers in his hand, o. p.

Dunnyplackett. Why who the devil's been moving the bottle that was on my table?

Susette. Bottle, Sir!

Dunnyplackett. Bottle, Sir! yes, bottle, Sir! Don't be bottling me, but tell me at once ——

Susette. Oh, I recollect, I moved it when I put the room to rights.

Dunnyplackett. I've a devilish good mind to put you to rights—how dare you, you hussey, to meddle with any thing belonging to me?

Susette. Why, thinks I, my master, he'll soon be home to dinner, and knowing you loved a cheerful glass after it, and seeing it was a bottle of wine, I brought it down to be ready.

Dunnyplackett. Wine! why you stupid, hussey—it was laudanum,

Susette. What! [Lifting up her hands in astonishment. Laudanum!

Dunnyplackett. Laudanum, yes, laudanum! why, damme, the girl looks as if she'd swallowed the whole of the contents.

Susette. No, Sir—I—I havn’t swallowed it. (*Aside.*)—But I know who has.

Dunnyplackett. Well, it’s very well you havn’t—if you had, you’d have been as dead as my grandmother. Now mind, I shall be back as soon as I can, keep a sharp look out.—Wine, eh! very pretty wine—nice dose you’d have had.—Wine, eh ! ha, ha, ha !

[*Exit Dunnyplackett at door.*

Susette. Oh, my lady, my lady, my lady !

Enter LEONORA.

Oh, ma’am, here’s a pretty mistake I have made, the liquor I gave the beggars, instead of being wine, was ——

Leonora. Was what ?

Susette. Laudanum, ma’am.

Leonora. Good heavens, quick, open the boxes, and let the poor wretches out.

Susette opens the boxes and shakes the beggars.

Susette. They won’t come out, ma’am.

Leonora. Why ?

Susette. Because they are dead.

Leonora. Dead—unfortunate, imprudent girl.

[*A knocking at the door, and a voice calls Susette.*

Leonora. Quick, girl, down with the lids of the boxes—quick, there’s somebody knocking.

Susette. I know the voice, it’s my sweetheart, Pero, your lover, Ricardo’s servant.

She closes the boxes, opens the door, and enter PERO.

Pero. My lady, your most obedient ! Ah, Susette, you pretty rogue, how d’ye do ? Oh, how I should like to have a kiss of them sweet pretty pouting lips of yours. My master madam, Signor Ricardo, whose very faithful servant I have the honour to be, bids me say, that in less than an hour he will hasten to you on the wings of love, and scaling the garden wall, will wait for you in his old station in the summer-house. (*Turns to Susette.*) Come here, you little devil, and

give me a kiss. Why what's the matter with you, you look as melancholy as an old maid at a wedding? —

Susette. Don't talk to me about old maids and weddings, I shall never be married.

Pero. You wont? —

Susette. No, but I shall be hung.

Pero. The devil, that's worse than 'tother. Why what have you done?

Susette. I've poisoned a man. —

Pero. (*Striding from her.*) How kind of you.

Leonora. Alas, Pero, 'tis too true, and how we are to get clear of the disaster I know not—help us, good Pero, with your counsel and advice.

Pero. State the case, ma'am, and I'll prescribe.

Susette. (*Aside to Leonora.*) Leave all to me. The long and short of it, Pero, is this:—A travelling musician passing, we called him in, and after he'd played a tune, I gave him a glass of wine, as I thought, to refresh him, but it turned out I'd filled him a glass out of old Dunny's laudanum bottle.

Pero. Oh, oh, then he croaked, eh!

Susette. And I —

Pero. Ah, and you most likely 'll croak too.

Susette. Unfortunate that I am.

Pero. Unfortunate! not at all, you've only killed a fiddler.

Leonora. You seem to make very light of it —

Pero. Well, but joking apart, madam—what have you done with this teazer of catgut?

Susette. There. [*Points to the box in back centre.*]

Pero. Oh, oh, what you have boxed him—wrong box for him, eh!

Susette. What do you laugh at, you brute you—think what's to be done if you don't mean to see me hung.

Pero. See you hung—I'd rather hang all the fiddlers in Italy. Let me see what's to be done? My genius just now is as dull as my pockets are empty.

Leonora. Then here's something to replenish your pockets and quicken your genius. [*Gives him a purse.*]

Pero. (*Taking the purse with one hand, and clapping the other on his forehead.*) You're right, madam, it has already done both—the touch of gold operates upon me like magic.

for no sooner did I feel this purse, than a thought flew from the palm of my hand up to my brain ; I've settled already what I shall do with this tormentor of fiddles.

Susette. Well, my dear Pero, what is it ?

Pero. Oh, my dear Pero, bless us, how loving we are.—Why, then, I'll tell you—you know the old well at the bottom of the garden, I shall hoist this son of a cremona on my shoulders, take him there, and down with him. So now let's have a look at him.

Susette. (*Runs to the box, and throwing up the lid, discovers Narbuc—Pero starts back in astonishment.*) There he is.

Pero. Why he's enough to frighten the devil, there's a nose, never saw such a handle to a man's face in my life; he's the ugliest fiddler I ever saw. Fiddler ! damme, if he an't a bottle-nosed trumpeter ; but never mind, down the well he goes, nose and all. There can be no harm in drowning a dead man—come, Susette, lend a hand, and clap him on my back. (*He gets Narbuc on his back, they helping him.*)—How dev'lish heavy he is, but it's no wonder, it's the weight of his nose. Come, open the door, I'll be back in a minute.

[*Exit at door in flat.*

Leonora. Well, Susette, and what do you mean to do with the other two ?

Susette. You'll see, ma'am, only you do as I do, and I'll warrant we get out of this scrape. (*Susette goes and opens the lid of the box on the right-hand side of the stage, and discovers Carbuc.*) Now, ma'am, follow me into this corner, and scream out Pero for dear life. [*They both run up into a corner, and scream out “ Pero, Pero.”*]

Enter PERO.

Pero. Hollo !

Susette. { Oh, Pero.
Leonora. }

Pero. Why, what's the matter ?

Susette. (*Pointing to the right-hand box.*) There, there !

Pero. (*Turning to the box, he sees Carbuc, and starts in surprise.*) What's that chap come back again ? Well, if I didn't shoot him into the well I'll be shot myself. Come here,

madam, come here, Susetta, and tell me all about it, don't be afraid, I'll protect you, I can lick a dozen dead men.

[*Leonora and Susette come down.*

Susette. Oh, Pero, just before you came, who should stalk in at the door but the very dead man you'd taken out, and after looking about, he says three three times in a solemn manner, "hem, hem, hem!" Then he turned up his guitar, and he danced to it exactly the same as when he was alive. Well, when he'd finished, he walked up to that box. (*Points to box in centre.*) And he shook his head, as much as to say I was in that box before, and I don't like it. Then he walked to that very box you see him in now, lifted up the lid, nodded his head, as much as to say this will do, in he popped, and there he is.

Leonora. (Aside.) Mercy on me, what an invention the girl has.

Pero. Well, then, I suppose I only dreamt that I threw him down the well—never mind, my fine fellow, I'll make sure of you now. By the great toe of St. Anthony, if I catch you here again after this, I'll cut your throat. [*He takes Carbuc on his back, Susette and Leonora assisting as before, and exit Pero; Susette and Leonora come down laughing heartily.*

Susette. So far, so good—now, madam, we must tread the same ground over once again, and then I think we're safe.— [*She goes and opens the lid of the left-hand box. and discovers Barbuc.*

Leonora. Well, thou'rt a brave wench, and a marriage portion shall be thine as soon as ever I'm of age! yet, believe me, I cannot help blaming myself for the fate of these three poor wretches, and regret we cannot give them christian burial.

Susette. And if you did, ma'am, I'm sure we should never have christian burial—remember our necks, ma'am. Now, my lady, another scream, nothing less than murder will do this time.

[*They both set up a scream of "Murder, Pero."*

Enter PERO.

Pero. Now then ! who's murdering you ?

Susette. You ought to be ashamed of yourself—look there.

[*Points to left-hand box.*

Pero. (*Turns and sees Barbuc.*) What, again?—It's the devil—I'll have nothing more to do with him.

[*He runs towards the door, Susette and Leonora pull him back.*]

Leonora. Fulfil the contract, either restore the purse, or away with the body down the well —

Pero. Why I have had him down the well twice, and you see here he is again; and as to restoring the purse—why—I wish you may get it.

Susette. In one word, do you love me

Pero. In two words—I do —

Susette. Do you wish to marry me?

Pero. Do I? Oh, I wish it was to take place in a quarter of an hour.

Susette. Then mind, you never marry me till you keep that fellow down the well —

Pero. No—then here goes once again — (Takes *Barbuc up on his back.*) Come along, old boy, and when you're down the well once more, sooner than you shall come up again, I'll chuck myself down after you, and keep you there —

Susette. No, don't do that, *Pero*, for if you do I shall miss being married, and that'll be a sad job —

[*Exit Pero at door in flat, Leonora and Susette laughing, R. H.*

SCENE THE SECOND.

A part of Dunnyplackett's garden.

Enter PERO with BARBUC on his back.

Pero. Come along, my fine fellow, when I plump you down the well *this time*, I think you'll stand a dev'lish poor chance of ever coming up again; when once you're down, I'll smother you with stones—if I can't drown you, I'll crack your skull, so here we go—how dev'lish heavy he is.

[*Exit.*

Enter DUNNYPLACKETT.

Dunnyplackett. My mind misgives me most confoundedly ; I can't help thinking but there's some mischief going on at home, the more so, because I saw Ricardo hovering about the house just now, trying, I suppose, to get a peep at Leonora ; but I'll mar the design—I'll take the back way to the house through the garden and by the old well. There's no knowing what mischief may be afloat—even Susette, instead of being in my interest, may be deceiving me all this while.—Zounds ! the very thought makes me ——. Oh, if the hussey should be playing double with me, I'll kill her—I'll bastinado her—I'll—I'll—I'll marry her, and live a hundred years to punish her.

[*Exit.*

SCENE THE THIRD.

A Garden, at the back a large old circular well wall, seen about three feet high, over it a cross beam, from which is suspended a draw rope—a large stone seen laying on the ground.

Enter PERO, with BARBUC on his back, he lays him down, then looks about, picks up the stone, takes a piece of rope out of his pocket, and very quietly slings it.

Pero. Exactly the thing I wanted—now, old boy, I'll sling this stone round your neck, and if that don't keep you down, why, I believe I must give it up as a bad job.

[*While he says this he slings the stone round Barbuc's neck, takes him up, and slings him head-foremost down the well.*

There, now, to make my job complete, I'll go and pick up half a dozen good pebbles, of about a pound weight each, and I'll be bound when I return and chuck them down upon him I hit him somewhere, if I don't break his head I'll break his nose, and that 'll be putting one troublesome article out of the way at any rate.

[*Exit.*

Enter RICARDO and LEONORA.

Ricardo. Never mind the fortune, Leonora, curse the money, 'tis you yourself I want, not the paltry trash; yield to my entreaties, lovely girl, fly from this guardian to the fond arms of your faithful lover, and I swear this very hour shall make you mine —

Leonora. Not so, Ricardo, I love you too well to come portionless to your arms—patience, patience, a few months longer, and both me and my fortune are yours, till then —

[*Dunnyplackett heard coughing without.* Good heavens, my guardian ! fly, fly, Ricardo—here, this way, this way.]

[*Exit.*]

Enter DUNNYPLACKETT.

Dunnyplackett. Now I shall pounce upon them nicely if they are playing me tricks—why who the devil's this ?

Enter PERO, without seeing Dunnyplackett—he has in his hand several large stones, which he throws down.

Pero. There, I think when they go upon his nob, they'll be a settler for old nosey. [Turns sharp round, and seeing Dunnyplackett starts to the side of the stage.

Why, damme, if nosey an't there again—ah, you can't deceive me, though you have changed your clothes, I know you by your nose. Stop a minute, I'll put you to bed with a shovel directly.

Dunnyplackett. Why you rascal you, who are you ?

Pero. What's that to you—I'm your executioner.

Dunnyplackett. Why what do you mean, you scoundrel ?

Pero. Come, come along, you must go into your old shop.

[He catches Dunnyplackett up in his arms.

Dunnyplackett. Help ! help !

Pero. It's no use, go you must — [He throws him head-foremost down the well, the three beggars roar out "murder." Why the fellow's got half a hundred voices—never mind, I'll make sure of you, I'll knock your brains out if you've got any. [He picks up the stones, and throws them down the well, as he throws the first down a voice roars out "oh, my nose," the second time "oh, my eye," the third time "curse your nose and your eye too, let me come out, murder."]

Enter RICARDO, LEONORA, and SUSEDTE.

Ricardo. }
Susette. } What's the matter ?
Leonora. }

Pero. Matter! matter enough—what do you think, ma'am, after sending that bottle-nosed fiddler three times neck and crop down the well, I hadn't been gone above five minutes before he was up again, and dressed in a fine suit of clothes too, but he couldn't deceive me, I knew him by his nose.

Susette. A fine suit of clothes, gemini! but I suspect something more mischief my lady. *Pero,* what was his clothes?

Pero. Green and gold.

Susette. Mercy on me, why you fool, you've killed old Dunnyplackett.

Pero. It's his own fault, he should have wore a different kind of nose, then there'd have been no mistake.

Leonora. Oh, my poor guardian—you've killed him.

Pero. Then you shouldn't have employed me to drown the one-eyed fiddler, but, however, here's the bucket-rope, we'll lower it down and give him a hoist, tho', I dare say, he's dead, for I gave him some precious toppers. I say, if you're dead tell us. [*He throws a stone down the well, a confused noise of different voices heard from the bottom of it—one crying "murder," another "give it him, Barbuc," a third "pitch into him, Barbuc."*]

Why, I'm blowed if he and the old fiddler an't fighting.

Ricardo. For heaven's sake let us get him up.

Pero. Come along, Sir, a little of your help, if you please, for his nose is dev'lisch heavy. [*Pero and Ricardo wind up the bucket-rope, and presently appears Dunnyplackett, then Barbuc, Carbuc, and Narbuc.*]

Hollo ! what four of you, and all alive ?

Dunnyplackett. Yes, you rascal, but there's no thanks to you for that.

Pero. Whenever I'm employed about a job I always like to finish it.

Dunnyplackett. Job, finish—I know you'd like to have finished me. Zounds, who was at the bottom of all this ?

Susette. Why you was just now, Sir.

Dunnyplackett. Me, hussey ?

Susette. Yes, at the bottom of the well, I mean.

Dunnyplackett. Psha ! go to the devil, who will explain all this.

Pero. Why I wonder you wasn't all drowned.

Carbuc. It's not the fashion for people to be drowned in a dry well. [Ricardo and Leonora come down.

Leonora. Only forgive us guardian, and we'll explain every thing.

Dunnyplackett. What you here, and Ricardo with you, nay, then, I see how it is—I perceive I'm an old fool at last.

Pero. What have you just found that out ?

Ricardo. Silence—come, Sir, be kind, my affection for Leonora is pure and disinterested, to prove it, give me Leonora, and I'll resign her fortune willingly.

Dunnyplackett: No, no, I'll not do things by haloes, there, take her fortune and all. [Join their hands.

Ricardo. Pero, what are you doing there with Susette ?

Pero. Doing what you have been doing, Sir—making love.

Leonora. I shall not forget my promise, the day that gives me to Ricardo, gives Susette to you ; but what can we say to our poor musicians for the troubles they've gone through, how make them amends, say what can we give you ?

Carbuc. Money !

Narbuc. Victuals !

Barbuc. And snuff !

Dunnyplackett. Well, now then let's in, and over a cheerful glass recount the mistaees of the day, then, "rising like giants refreshed," we may come forward and say, Ladies and Gentlemen, with your permission, the Four Hunchbacks will once more tell their tale to you to-morrow.

FINALE.

Now let us merry sing,
And chase all care away,
For soon the wedding-ring
Shall make us blythe and gay ;
Come again to-morrow,
Joy shall banish sorrow ;
Ever merry shall you be,
While you see the beggars three.

FINIS.

